

11/11/77

Dear Tom,

This hasty response to your 1/3 is not intended to offend. Were I not blunt with you that would be unkind and unfriendly.

Harper's turned down your piece but "I am convinced that it is a solid piece of writing." Then, next graf, "I don't agree with your analysis of the CIA conference." Unless you know enough so you have to agree you don't know enough to do any really responsible writing. Fensterwald and all his close ones do agree, as they would not in advance. They are heart-sick and Smith, I'm told, is still depressed.

If you can say of the sick and the dangerous Skolnick that 50% is accurate you have no basis for discriminating. And your other 50% is no worse than "an extension of the rest," the presumed 50% "accurate?"

Find a hole and cover it behind you if you are serious and in coming years want your self-respect!

This is not the kind of subject one can free-lance easily. You can't interview a dozen whores and claim to know enough about prostitution to write honestly here.

You are "glad that the links between Watergate and Dallas was forced to the floor, quite disappointed that once it got there frivolity was pretty much the rule." What links and what the hell do you or can you know about it? When you talk of "links" you are talking about fact, not opinion. You can have any belief you want and it need not be fact, but when a writer talks about fact he has obligations to the people.

"I don't dismiss the more outrageous researchers because of their flamboyance..." You have a special definition of "researcher." You can't make this statement on fact. Which of these "researchers" do you regard as merely "flamboyant?" And who, to your knowledge, has done good, solid research since Sylvia revised her manuscript before her book was published?

Grab hold of yourself, man!

From this sample if you do get anything published you'll come to regret it more than Harper's rejection, much more, and with good reason: you'll be ashamed.

You have just gone for all the wild improvisations and inventions coming from the broad spectrum between the insane and the self-seekers. Some are genuine and just beyond their depth and overpowered by emotion. A goodly portion, however, are just plain evil.

Tom, I've been around a long time. I know just about all these people and I think there is no body who has done more work in the field than I. I am certain there is no single person who has duplicated much if not most of it. I know what I am talking about. The only reason I take the time to respond is to try to save you from yourself and the solid work from the unintended defamation you would inevitably write from what you reveal of yourself on this letter.

Can't you realize that everything some shit goes across an editor's desk he believes there is nobody who has anything besides shit to offer? They just discard anything on the subject. So many have told me! And I've read so much from the dedicated wrong that proves it!

If I knew enough to figure Harper's before you told me, can't you consider that maybe I do know enough to warn you?

But if they do get an Andy St. George to do a similar piece, that won't hurt those doing the real work in the field and Tom Miller will not have reason to look back and say, "There went my self-respect."

Best regards,